

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A gaming apparatus, comprising:
a primary game having a bonus feature; and
a bonus indicator separate from and non-identical to said primary game, said bonus indicator to be enabled by credit wagered in said primary game, to operate substantially simultaneously with said primary game, to be of approximately the same duration as said primary game, and to indicate, independent of any outcome of the primary game, whether a player is entitled to said bonus feature.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols and wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved.
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said bonus indicator is a roulette type wheel.
4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said bonus indicator is one or more reels.
5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols, wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved, and wherein said bonus indicator is a roulette type wheel.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols, wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved, and wherein said bonus indicator is one or more reels.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus is connected to an overall casino management system which monitors and controls said apparatus.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus is linked to one or more other gaming apparatuses to create a bank of hyperlinked gaming apparatuses.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said bonus indicator is used to show participation in a tournament played across a linked group of gaming apparatuses.

10 – 21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously Presented) A method for playing a gaming machine, comprising:

playing a primary game having a bonus feature; and

automatically initiating a separate bonus indicator when credit is wagered in said primary game, said bonus indicator to operate substantially simultaneously with and be non-identical to said primary game, to be of approximately the same duration as said primary game, and to indicate, independent of any outcome of the primary game, whether a player is entitled to said bonus feature.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols and wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said bonus indicator is a roulette type wheel.

25. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said bonus indicator is one or more reels.

26. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols, wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved, and wherein said bonus indicator is a roulette type wheel.

27. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols, wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved, and wherein said bonus indicator is one or more reels.

28. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said gaming machine is connected to an overall casino management system which monitors and controls said gaming machine.

29. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said gaming machine is linked to one or more other gaming machines to create a bank of hyperlinked gaming machines.

30. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said bonus indicator is used to show participation in a tournament played across a linked group of gaming machines.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Previously Presented) A method for playing a gaming machine, comprising:

playing a primary game; and

automatically enabling and initiating a separate bonus indicator when credit is wagered in said primary game, said bonus indicator to operate simultaneously with and be non-identical to

said primary game, to be of approximately the same duration as said primary game, and to indicate, independent of any outcome of the primary game, whether a player is entitled to a bonus feature to said primary game.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein said bonus feature provides the player with the opportunity to win a prize, promotional item or message from a casino.

34. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols and wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved.

35. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said bonus indicator is a roulette type wheel.

36. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said bonus indicator is one or more reels.

37. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols, wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved, and wherein said bonus indicator is a roulette type wheel.

38. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said primary game contains a plurality of reels, each of which is capable of displaying symbols, wherein said primary game is won when a predetermined combination of symbols is achieved, and wherein said bonus indicator is one or more reels.

39. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said gaming machine is connected to an overall casino management system which monitors and controls said gaming machine.

40. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said gaming machine is linked to one or more other gaming machines to create a bank of hyperlinked gaming machines.

41. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said bonus indicator is used to show participation in a tournament played across a linked group of gaming machines.

42 – 48. (Canceled)

49. (Currently Amended) A gaming device having a primary game for play by a player, the gaming device comprising:

a computer configured to present a primary game outcome of the primary game, and to substantially simultaneously present a bonus indicator to [[a]] the player, said bonus indicator being enabled by credit wagered in said primary game and designating, independent of [[any]] said outcome of the primary game, at least one of a bonus condition or a non-bonus condition; and

means for initiating wherein said primary game having a bonus feature for initiation said primary game where when said bonus indicator designates [[a]] said bonus condition.

50. (Currently Amended) The gaming device of claim 49 ~~comprising~~ wherein said computer is configured to display a second game to the player as said bonus indicator and to issue for issuing a bonus to the player ~~where~~ when said bonus indicator designates [[a]] said bonus condition.

51. (Previously Presented) A gaming apparatus, comprising:

a primary game having a bonus feature, said primary game configured to operate to produce at a display winning and losing primary game outcomes; and

a bonus indicator enabled by credit wagered in said primary game to operate substantially simultaneously with said primary game, said bonus indicator displayed separately from said primary game outcome display and randomly selected between enabling and not enabling said bonus feature independent of said primary game outcome.